RAGGED SCHOOL UNION QUARTERLY RECORD.

OCTOBER, 1881.

EXHIBITIONS.

Of the many good works associated with the name of the lamented Prince Albert, the institution of the Grand International Exhibition in Hyde Park, in 1851, will perhaps be longest remembered. That great idea of bringing together the nations of the world to show in friendly competition the produce of their wealth and invention, was an example which has been followed at short intervals in nearly every country boasting a high state of civilisation. The key-note struck in London has been heard in Paris and welcomed in Vienna; Belgium, Russia, and most other European nations quickly took up the cry, whilst the United States, Canada, and the far-distant Antipodes were not slow to follow in their wake. There can, therefore, be but little doubt that, in spite of the sneers of interested parties, these exhibitions have been instrumental in producing a vast amount of good, both in promoting good feeling between foreign countries and furthering the advance of commerce.

On a much smaller scale, of course, but equally beneficial in their way, have been the various Working Men's Exhibitions so successfully instituted from time to time in various parts of the country, the competitors being enabled to see what others were doing in their special line of business, and a healthy rivalry was established that had the effect of urging the workers on to further endeavours or of starting fresh ideas altogether.

What was, therefore, so advantageous for nations and for individuals, it was thought could not but be productive of good to children who had their way to make in the world, and hence it is greatly to the credit of Mr. Charles Montague, the honorary superintendent of the King Edward Ragged Schools, Spitalfields,

that he has so successfully carried out the idea of holding annual exhibitions of work done by the boys and girls connected with the schools.

Where practicable those lads who show a special aptitude for any business are encouraged to persevere, and are sometimes placed with kind friends to be instructed. The girls, of course, are taught needlework in its various branches, so as to be of assistance both to themselves and their parents, and all are encouraged to employ their leisure hours in a profitable manner, in order that they may be prevented from engaging in "more mischief still," which, Dr. Watts tells us, "Satan finds for idle hands to do." By giving the children thus early an insight into the work of life, it enables them to make a better choice of what they would like to be when they grow up. It may be that Bob Styles's father is a bricklayer and Jack Stubbs's parent a hard-working bootmaker, whilst Sarah's mother is a charwoman; but neither Bob, Jack, nor Sarah have any desire to follow the parental calling, and would rather choose for themselves their future business in life. Other children, again, and their name is legion, poor things, who have attended these schools, have no parents at all, and, like Mr. Gilbert's policeman, their lot would be anything but a happy one if they had not something to do. The idea is, "Give a boy something to do—something involving a little ingenuity, such as making a box, a cardboard model, or toy, no matter what—and it is hard indeed if he be not so accustomed to keep his hands employed that he will never become an idle man."

The boy is father of the man, and it is therefore essential both for the boy's sake and for that of the man that he should be taught "to do something," in which he may find amusement when he is young and subsequent profit when he grows older.

Another reason why these exhibitions have been so successful is because Bob sees what Jack has done, and tries to do better, while Sarah endeavours to surpass Mary in her needlework, all to their mutual advantage, and the parents and friends, becoming interested by the rivalry thus established, encourage the children in their pursuits. Thus good is caused by seeing good done, and a happy home is often the result.

Having thus shown almost the necessity of holding these exhibitions, we will turn our attention to one that took place last year, in September, at the King Edward Ragged Schools,

as shown in our illustration. It was the twelfth show, and may therefore be supposed to have made a good appearance both in the quality as well as quantity of the articles exhibited, and some idea may be formed of the quantity when we state that all the articles forwarded were accepted for the exhibition, in order that every child might be encouraged "to do something." And what a heterogeneous collection it was! from really useful articles, such as chairs and tables, to toys of marvellous construction, fearfully and wonderfully put together, but all displaying considerable ingenuity on the part of the makers. Some of the exhibits showed the great patience of the manufacturers, the inlaying and mosaic work being especially noticeable, whilst models of all sorts and sizes figured rather conspicuously, this being evidently a favourite occupation. The work of the girls consisted rather of the *utile* than the *dulce*, though some very pretty specimens of fancy work were shown, all of which were exceedingly well done, and reflected great credit on those who had the training of the children. An excellent plan to encourage the children of this department has been adopted by the committee, and that is to contribute a quarter of the cost of the material required for making their own clothes and that of their friends. As may readily be imagined, this privilege is easily sought after, and hence the girls not only reap future benefit, but present comfort. Indeed in this respect the term "Ragged School" is rather a misnomer, for at King Edward Street it is the exception, and not the rule, to see the children in dilapidated habiliments. The boys are the greatest offenders, as parents of all classes have experienced, but the natural desire "to be like other boys" has a wonderful effect upon the youngsters, and makes them more careful.

It will be seen, therefore, from whatever point of view these exhibitions are regarded, that the result is excellent; and it is with much pleasure we notice that the thirteenth exhibition will be held at the King Edward Schools on Tuesday, the 11th October, 1881, and that Alderman Sir Robert Walter Carden, M.P., has kindly consented to undertake the opening ceremony.

The following are the conditions under which articles for the exhibition will be received:—

1st. That all articles must be delivered at the school-house, King Edward Street, on or before Wednesday, the 6th October, 1881, with the name, age, and address of the exhibitor attached to each article.

2nd. That all articles sent in for exhibition must be the work of the exhibitor. The committee reserve to themselves the right of testing each or any exhibitor.

3rd. That girls' hats and bonnets intended for exhibition must be delivered in bandboxes, or they will not be received; and

4th. That all the articles must be taken away the day after the exhibition closes.

What more can we say, than to hope that the thirteenth exhibition will surpass in quality and quantity any of the previous twelve? More successful it cannot be, but the committee and teachers will be fully satisfied if it be as much appreciated.

We may fully expect to hear that the neighbourhood of the schools is in "a perfect fever of excitement" by the time Sir Robert's carriage drives up for the opening ceremony; and when we think of the innocent pleasure and healthy recreation thus aroused, we hope, in the words of Johnny Gilpin, that we "may be there to see."

FLOWER GIRLS' MISSION.

Amongst the various institutions which are affiliated to the Ragged School Union, there are none which deals more largely with the class we strive to benefit than this, as the following particulars, supplied by the reports of the society, amply show.

The number of girls and women employed in this precarious occupation is 1,200. The work embraces early morning visiting at the markets and streets; theatres, music-halls, &c., at night; home, sick, and poor visiting, open-air services and tract distribution, Sabbath and week-evening services, Sunday School, free evening school, hot meat dinners for poor children, Clothing Club, Penny Bank, Emily Loan Fund, Sewing Classes, Bands of Hope, &c.

The object of the Mission is to reach with the Gospel these girls and women, who are exposed to all the ills and evils of street life, and by the formation of clubs, classes, and meetings, to assist them in the winter to earn a living when flowers, &c., fail; also, where possible, to take the young from the streets, and place them in homes or at service; to abolish Sunday trading amongst them, and by various means to benefit them temporally and spiritually. The work is carried on by two paid agents and over fifty voluntary helpers, under an hon. superintendent. Two hundred young girls have already been rescued from a street life beset with perils.

The institution was started some twelve or fourteen years ago by

a small band of earnest men and women, under the leadership of Mr. John A. Groom. Their little Mission-hall, in close proximity to Farringdon Market, gave them an opportunity of watching the character of these toilers of the street, and it was found that they were, for the most part, an honest and industrious class of people, who would rather work than beg. It was found also, that while so many excellent institutions existed for the benefit of the deserving poor, the watercress and flower sellers had apparently been forgotten. This little band therefore determined to do all in its power to ameliorate the condition of these unfortunate people.

"Trained," says Mr. Groom, "almost from infancy to get their living in the streets, they are compelled to rise at four or five o'clock, sometimes earlier, to attend at the different markets; and often after commencing work at this early hour, and continuing till late at night, they return with scarcely enough to purchase necessaries, to say nothing of money for stock on the morrow. Take the early spring, the time when the flowers are most plentiful, and the hopes of the girls therefore at the highest, and we find that even then their trade (if such we may call the sale of flowers) is but a scanty existence.

"We will quote a case which came under our notice last spring. A woman, tempted by the fine bright morning, had expended her all in flowers. During the day a biting north-east wind sprang up, and completely withered her hopes as well as her flowers, and she had to return home, her stock withered, and she penniless. We will take another. It will be remembered what terribly cold, wet weather prevailed at the Easter of 1880. Anxious to see how our people were doing, and, through the kindness of Lady Burdett-Coutts, having a little at our disposal wherewith to relieve any case we found particularly distressing, we sallied forth on Good Friday, round a few of the main thoroughfares of the metropolis, where our people congregate to sell their wares. By the time we reached the Strand the afternoon was far advanced. As we neared Charing Cross our attention was arrested by an innocent-looking little face of about ten summers. She was holding in her hand a punnet of flowers, containing a few roses and one or two white camellias, all of which had been spoiled by the rain and cold, but which she was bravely trying to sell. Fleeing from the police, who will not allow them to stand about, but are always requesting them to 'move on,' she ran against a passer-by, and the next moment her flowers were lying in the gutter, and her last chance of success entirely gone. This was too much for the brave little heart, and she cried bitterly. After remonstrating with the policeman, who as a rule, perhaps, are rather more inexorable than they need be, we spoke to the girl, got a few par-

ticulars, took her name and address, and promised to investigate her case, which we did, and found her statement in substance correct. Her home was a little back room in one of the lowest courts in the vicinity of Drury Lane. The room was so dark that it was some moments before we could see, the window was stuffed with rags and paper, and altogether the sight was one sickening in the extreme. On a bed in a corner of the room lay the widowed mother of this child. Beside her lay her daughter, vainly trying to hush the hungry wail of a baby but a few days old. Staring at us with a wild, vacant stare stood a half-idiot girl of about eighteen years of age, making four souls besides herself dependent on this one little girl.

"As regards the condition of watercress-sellers, their life, if possible, is even more hard and trying than that of the flower-vendor. This Mission is aided by the Emily Loan Fund, which was instituted by the Earl of Shaftesbury some years since, in memory of the late countess. Its object is to assist those who from sickness, hard times, or any unavoidable cause, are utterly unable to make a start. The loan consists chiefly of money, advanced to purchase any article that may seem to give them the best chance of success during the winter months—*e.g.*, a basket, potato-oven, coffee-stall, barrow, a stall for whelks and oysters, baskets for stock, or money for more seasonable and expensive articles. This is paid back at the rate of one shilling in the pound per week. As only the bare capital is repaid—no interest or fees of any description being charged—it stands to reason that the fund sustains a continual loss by the different necessary expenses. To resuscitate the same, and to keep it on the high pinnacle of usefulness on which we feel it deserves to be kept, we appeal with confidence to the benevolently disposed."

Out of the Flower Girls' Mission sprang the Flower Girls' Brigade, which is under the patronage of the Right Hon. Baroness Burdett-Coutts. The Flower Mission had enlisted the lively sympathy and assistance of her friend Mrs. Brown, whose death in 1878 was felt to be an irreparable loss. But the Baroness has herself taken up the cause in which her cherished friend was so deeply interested, and is now endeavouring to raise the whole tone of this flower-selling class by diminishing, as far as possible, those precarious conditions of their trade which have hitherto baffled their attempts to live in decency by honest industry. To accomplish this it was essential to secure for the flower-sellers regular custom, but it seemed hopeless to begin the experiment with the women taken from the streets in their natural rough condition. The Baroness therefore determined to make the trial with the girls, and accordingly, in the spring of 1879, founded a society from the most hopeful amongst them, which she called the

Flower Girl Brigade. These girls are clothed in a neat dress, not strictly a uniform but of similar materials and makes, and they wear an ivory badge on a blue ribbon. They are supplied with flowers, which are bought in Covent Garden Market, and are never allowed to be under any but the Brigade-room roof; and on the sale of these they receive a small commission, besides regular weekly wages They are stationed in places where they can sell their flowers, either bouquets or for the button-hole, secure from insult and molestation, and they are also sent with supplies to regular customers in various parts of London. In this last case the girls are always provided with additional flowers to sell to chance customers. But these sources of employment are, for the most part, only available during spring and summer. It therefore became necessary to find some industry by which the girls of the Brigade might be kept employed during the late autumn and winter months. Owing to their early freedom from all restraint it is not easy, scarcely indeed practicable, to teach them any business involving much monotony and confinement. The Baroness at length decided to have them trained to mount and arrange artificial flowers, and the aptitude they show for this work is something wonderful. Their early familiarity with natural flowers, and their unconscious observation of their growth, peculiarities of foliage, &c, seem to have fitted the girls precisely for this handiwork. If a steady sale for their wares could be secured, a strong hope is entertained that in time the girls might look forward to comparative freedom from the severe hardships which befall their class every winter and in rainy and inclement seasons.

Much may be done to help the Flower Girl Brigade by dealing direct with it for cut flowers and flowers for the button-hole, bouquets for weddings, balls, and parties, church decorations, growing plants, watercress, radishes, bird-weeds, &c.; and also for artificial flowers, such as wreaths and knots for dresses and bonnets, imitations of growing plants, bouquets, wreaths, and crosses of immortelles and grasses for memorials, &c. A lady with an extensive artificial flower business at the West End, recently entrusted the Brigade with the execution of an important order, intimating at the same time that should it be completed satisfactorily they might look for further support. To those who are acquainted with Mr. Groom and his staff, it is unnecessary to say that their efforts were successful, and it is pleasing to know that the lady is now one of their best customers. The superintendent, Mr. Groom, supplies post-cards with printed addresses to all who will deal with the Brigade, the home of which is in Clerkenwell Close, Clerkenwell, E.C., and any order posted a day before, will be carefully and punctually executed.

It will be seen from the list of operations that their minds and souls are not left untended. Sunday Schools, Free Night Schools, Bands of Hope, Penny Banks, &c., are conducted with a view to touch the springs of their being, and to show them that their lower life, with its drudgery and its cares, may be ennobled by motives which relate them to the common Father of us all.

The superintendent tells us that the Society is urgently in need of funds. The winter is coming, which means an increased demand on very slender resources. Subscriptions may be forwarded through the Ragged School Union.

THE LAMBETH RAGGED SCHOOLS IN DANGER.

THE following paragraph, an editorial note from the *South London Press*, like the cloud no bigger than a man's hand rising out of the sea, portends a storm :—

"We hear that the Charity Commissioners intend to dispose of the Lambeth Ragged School. What the precise reasons for this extraordinary step are we do not pretend to know. It is just probable that the Ragged School in question having done an immensity of good in a very poor locality has, on that account, come under the ban of 'my lords' at Whitehall, whose primary object, when such is the case, appears to be to divert charity into some channel which it was never intended to serve. Does nobody possess the power to say 'Hands off' to the Charity Commissioners? or are they to remain omnipotent, in the indulgence of whatsoever their wayward fancies dictate? It is satisfactory to know that the friends of the Ragged School movement have determined that the Lambeth school shall not be lost without a protest, and it is just probable the public will hear more of the matter."

We are happy in stating that various protests against this act of violence have been forwarded to the Charity Commissioners. That on behalf of the Committee of the Ragged School Union was signed by Lord Shaftesbury. A full statement of facts is being prepared, and will be published in our next number. Should the Commissioners succeed in alienating these noble and useful schools from the purposes intended by their founder, nine hundred poor children who have hitherto met for instruction will be cast upon the streets.

We cannot conceive by what statute the Commissioners are authorised to inflict so outrageous and uncalled-for an act upon poor children, or by what power the endowments intended for their welfare should be handed over for middle-class scholarships.

Editor.

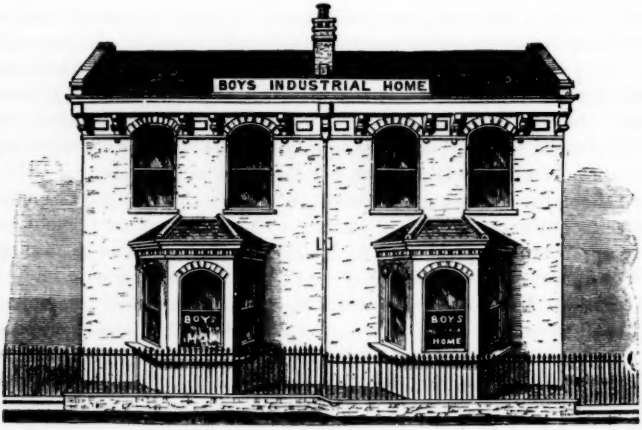
A RAGGED SCHOOL WHICH GREW INTO AN INDUSTRIAL HOME.

THIS praiseworthy effort commenced in a small room in Blue Lion Court in August, 1869, by two very young men, Messrs. Chaplin and Jones. A short notice in a paper of a good wash and a tea given to some poor boys, led them to a wise resolve—the consecration of their lives to the benefit of outcast children. They tried their prentice hands on four boys. To their small room rags and wretchedness were the conditions of entrance. Dirt, hunger, and ignorance were nightly dealt with: the first stage was a wash, the second a meal, the third a lesson. If a boy showed an unconquerable repugnance to soap and water, he received impressive notice of ejectment. Such instances, however, were very rare. It soon got noised abroad that a new Benevolence Shop was opened, and a crowd of customers for its cheap wares soon thronged the entrance, but the doors were too strait for such numbers. It was determined after a time to admit girls. On the first night of their coming a boy in the lavatory was found covered with lather. When questioned about the excessive use of soap, he replied, "Didn't you say the girls were coming?" Here was refinement in rags, and a sentiment of reverence enough to make the sex curtsey as to a little king. The same sanitary conditions were applied to the girls, who, with clean, bright faces, and clean pinafore or apron, very soon became quite presentable to the young lords of the creation. As the work proceeded, the teachers increased in numbers and confidence, and their pupils multiplied also. Straitened for space, two larger rooms were taken in Shaftesbury Place, in which, besides ordinary teaching, parents' gatherings and children's services were conducted.

The work bore fruit, as the following case, one of many, will show. When invited to a wash and a tea, one poor boy replied, "Oh yes, it's too good; you don't mean it." His experience had made him so familiar with want, nakedness, and indifference to his condition, as to induce a sentiment of distrust. This boy had no father, and his mother was a drunken prostitute. He was left, of course, to shift for himself. He came to the school, attended very regularly, and soon gave signs of becoming a promising scholar. After a while, in reply to a question as to how he was getting on, he said, "Oh, fine now, teacher! Have left mother, and am now living along of myself. Makes enough money to keep myself in grub, and sleep in a passage at night." A letter was recently received from him, in which he states that he is in good work, and in the receipt of weekly wages varying from eighteen to twenty shillings.

However, as time went on it was felt that the class of children with whom they were dealing needed much more care and oversight. The good they gained at night was frequently lost through the influences of the bad homes and places where they spent the rest of their lives.

After much meditation, conference, and prayer, it was determined to establish an Industrial Home. So in the early part of 1873, at Forest Hill, about five minutes' walk from the station on the Brighton line, a cottage was taken and adapted for this work. As the means increased another cottage was taken. These two adjoining cottages, as shown in the picture, sufficed for some time. A third cottage has now been taken for girls, under the superintendence of a Ladies'



Committee. This home was opened by the Earl of Shaftesbury one Wednesday afternoon in June. The first girls, four in number, were sent by Mr. George Holland, whose advice and persuasion had much to do with its establishment and extension.

His lordship expressed great pleasure with this new undertaking for girls. Such institutions, he said, were much needed. "It was only within the last few years that they had seen the necessity of taking charge of these little girls; formerly all their attention was directed to the boys, while they neglected their sisters. Now they could see what an important part they neglected. The returns of the Census showed that the females were in excess of the males by nearly one million. That was a great difference, and one of an alarming character. They must look after the condition of these little girls,

and train them for domestic service. It was marvellous to what an extent these children responded to the care bestowed on them."

The children admitted to these Homes are between the ages of eight and ten years, whose destitute surroundings would tend to lead them wrong. Each application is thoroughly sifted. One boy admitted from Holborn had lived with mother, sister, brother, and twenty other persons all in one room. Another was the child of a professional man who had kept his carriage, and whose wife and children were thrown on the streets through drink; and one, without a known friend, was left by a tramp in a low public-house in the East End. Where parents are too poor to pay anything towards the keep, the case is admitted free, but where possible a small weekly charge is made, from sixpence to four shillings, according to means.

The number in the Institution commenced with four, it is now twenty-eight. More will be admitted as the needful funds come in. The officers are Master and Matron (father and mother) and Assistant-Master. The trades of bootmaking and wood-chopping are pursued. About £100 a year is made by these industries. It is intended as soon as possible to substitute some other occupation for that of wood-chopping.

The girls will be trained in sewing, cleaning, and cookery. The number of boys and girls is too small to justify the employment of a salaried teacher, the children are therefore sent to a neighbouring national school, which is under the care of a certified master. The religious instruction on Sundays and week evenings is given by members of the committee and other kind friends. The friends of the boys and girls are allowed to visit the Homes, and holidays of three days are allowed them also. On leaving (at the age of fourteen) an outfit is provided and a situation found, and five shillings a year for three years is payable on presenting a good-conduct letter from the employer.

The testimony of the following gentlemen is valuable. Sir Charles Mills, Bart., says: "The other day I had an opportunity of visiting this Home, and as my visit was accidentally made at an earlier hour than was intended, there was no preparation either with regard to the house or the inmates; therefore I consider that I saw it in its ordinary condition. I can only say that everything I saw was very satisfactory indeed; the rooms were wonderfully clean, the beds very well arranged, and the boys, though in their everyday working suits, were very clean and neat. I think any one who goes into this Home and sees the boys must be very much struck at the contrast between their appearance and that of their companions left in the streets; the eager, wizened look of the latter seems to have

disappeared, and a look of frankness and simplicity appears to have taken its place. I was very much struck also with the great care and interest of those who have the management—I believe they are called the father and mother of the Home—and it appeared to me that the committee had been very fortunate in obtaining their services. Though the Home is a small one, I think that it perhaps has its advantages over large institutions, because it gives opportunities of superintendence, of ascertaining the disposition of a boy, and of taking care of his individual interests."

The Rev. H. Stevens, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Sydenham, states that he had an opportunity not long ago of seeing the children in their Home. He examined them in Scripture, and was most favourably impressed with their intelligence, with the practical character of their lessons, and with the bearing it was made to have on their future lives and duties. He believed that this Institution was one of the most economically worked that he knew.

The committee appeal for aid to carry on the work, costing nearly £480 a year. The treasurer is Mr. A. C. H. Chaplin, Birley House, London Road, Forest Hill, S.E.; and secretary Mr. J. F. Jones, Littlebury, Stanstead Road, Forest Hill, S.E.

In addition to aid for current expenses, the committee also ask for contributions to a special fund for placing the Home under one roof. At present the three cottages are divided, two on one side of the road and one on the other. The great difficulty of good supervision, and the discomfort of going to and fro, especially in the winter, render this question most important; £200 has been already subscribed, and about £1,000 more is needed.

THE CHILDREN'S DAY.

Two Thousand Happy Children.

On Friday, July 22, we were privileged to spend the day with the children of the Ragged School Union at High Beech, Epping Forest, and we are anxious to give our friends a little sketch of the day's proceedings. This, we believe, is one of the largest excursions of the year, embracing, as it did on this occasion, children from twenty different Ragged Schools in all parts of London. No small company they formed, there being in round numbers 2,000 children and 200 teachers. Such, however, were the admirable arrangements that all passed off without a hitch, and this large army of youngsters were in safety restored to their wonted domiciles, with the exception of one adventurous youth, somewhat hurt by tumbling off a van.

From all quarters of London contingents were sent to swell this happy army; from Camberwell, Marylebone, St. Pancras, Southwark; from Westminster and Ratcliff; from Saffron Hill, St. Luke's, and Spitalfields, from Bermondsey and Limehouse, the district Ragged Schools had sent their companies to join the throng of boisterous, happy pleasure-seekers.

Starting betimes, we crossed London from West to East, and cast in our lot with the Ratcliff Ragged School, from which 180 children were permitted to enjoy the treat. A brief account of this school will illustrate all the rest.

Under the Arches.

Under a gloomy railway arch we find a long row of pleasure-vans, and, guided by the throng of onlookers, we reach the school (which occupies the railway arch). Inside there is much bustle and stir as the little ones are flocking in, and their indefatigable mistress, Miss Farmer, is enrolling each name in a little book (a very necessary precaution, as we find at eventide), while the good superintendent, Rev. R. H. Atherton, Vicar of St. Matthew's, Stepney, is beaming his delight at the joy imparted by anticipation to many a little one in whose miserable home few joys reside. But are these *ragged* children? True, their less happy comrades outside (the uninvited) look ragged enough, but do not these look somewhat tidy? Yes, for the day they do; but in most cases it is the result of long preparation and effort on the part of Miss Farmer and her helpers: the girls have been encouraged to sew and mend, shirts have been made for the boys, a supply of white canvas jackets has been cheaply secured, which aid to cover the rags, the kindness of neighbours has been taxed for the loan of little jackets and skirts, the old clothes markets have been ransacked by mothers anxious that their little ones should be somewhat tidy to enjoy the day, boots have been lent by the school, and the result of all this combined effort is that the children look moderately respectable and tidy, while clean they undoubtedly are, so far as can be seen. Certainly a few of the girls are wearing mother's skirt, which, as pins drop out in the course of a day's romping, hang down in rather awkward fashion; still the moral effect of all this endeavour after tidiness is by no means to be despised, albeit that it entails many anxieties and heavy work on their schoolmistress, who, with 300 such children on the school-roll, has certainly no sinecure.

While the preliminaries were in progress we strolled down some of the by-streets, under the care of the vicar, and saw for ourselves the overcrowded, broken-down, unhealthy, and in hot weather stifling

and inodorous houses from which the children are gathered. Surely, we thought, even one long day in the open country will be a blessing to the little residents of these places!

En Route.

But the vans have been filling, and we are now ready to start; and in the midst of much laughter, shouting, and cheering, off we go.

Down the Commercial Road, through Stepney and Limehouse, past the East India Docks (with the throngs of many-hued sailors), through Poplar, Bromley, and Stratford, till at length we emerge at Leytonstone into suburban scenes, and the journey becomes a real pleasure for all. There are fifteen miles of it, so the little ones have plenty of time for singing of all sorts, in tune and out of it, but always hearty and happy. We are much interested in these older girls, about twenty of whom have been invited to join the party. Formerly day scholars in the Ragged School, they are now working in a large factory, and attend Night School. Already in factory life they have learned much that is grievous, but we cannot help observing their touching devotion to Miss Farmer, from whom a word is sufficient to stop some "comic," and by no means moral song, even when vigorously started in full swing. Led away by example, they sing and talk as we should not like our little ones to do, but they do not mean to do wrong, and we saw some actually weeping bitterly "'cause teacher thinks I'm bad." Such a loving and womanly influence exercised over "factory girls" is worthy of note, and is a hopeful token for the future.

In Epping Glades.

But here is High Beech; the sounds of laughter and shouting and the glinting of many banners among the trees tell us we have reached our destination. The vans are unloaded, the children fall in two by two, we march to the rendezvous, and set our particular banner by a great branching tree which forms for the day the rallying-point of Ratcliff School. Now the children sit down and eat what they have brought with them, but one or two dear little things tell us, "I've ate my dinner," and for such some kindly provision is made. This over, and the teachers refreshed, there are games, and romps, and races, and rambles in the greenwood. "Where shall we get wild flowers?" is the cry of many of the elder ones, and when directed off they go, returning somewhat later with little bouquets that indicate in some cases the possession of considerable taste. In the afternoon toys are distributed. Every child, at the cost of the Ragged School Union, received some plaything. Then there are fruit and tea, and as the fresh

air and long ride have sharpened the appetites of 2,000 children, our readers may understand that the demands on the central commissariat (Messrs. Earee) were great. Plentiful provision had, however, wisely been made, and so far as we could see in all the twenty gatherings no one ran short. Bread-and-butter, cake, fresh fruit, and tea *ad libitum* were the order of the hour, and nearly an hour was spent over this important part of the proceedings. Then the teachers had tea—for the children's wants are first attended to—and while at tea we were told by Mr. Kirk that one little urchin had been found without his card (for school cards had been fastened by the teachers to the dress of all the children for the purpose of identification), and all he could tell was that he belonged to *the school*, and had a teacher named Smith. Face to face with the teachers, however, he was soon identified by the sharp eyes of his own teacher, and so his sorrows were at end.

And now eventide is approaching, the teachers join heartily for an hour in the children's romps. Then the gathering signal is given, and school clusters form round their respective banners.

The Children's Gratitude.

And now we are about to refill the vans; but ere we do so the children's secret must be told. A large ring is formed by our school, the vicar is asked to step into the middle, and there, in the name of the children, he is presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers, for which, out of their poverty, they had been saving up their "farthings" for some time.

And now they crowd into the vans with as much eagerness and joy as they displayed in the morning (for the long ride itself is a great treat to them), and, with banners flying, homeward we ride, the eighty or ninety vans in their several detachments creating no small stir *en route*. Safely, and without incidents—save for a blue-light illumination as the much-loved vicar alights at his residence—we reach Ratcliff railway arches about ten o'clock, creating quite a sensation in the neighbourhood, and without loss of time the children alight and scatter to their homes—and, so far as we are concerned, all are returned in safety.

So ends a happy day, a day that will live in 2,000 juvenile memories, a day of genuine pleasure, a day of health-giving enjoyment, a day which has linked many young hearts closer to those who are seeking and labouring for their well-being, temporal and eternal.

A Fortnight's Holiday.

The children's outing this year has been varied by a most pleasing episode. Some reference in the columns of *Truth* to the practice of this Union in taking out some of the poorest schools and subsidising others, led to some kindly help from the readers of that journal. From amongst these came a gracious offer from a lady residing at Cut Hedge, near Halstead, to take a number of children (about seventeen at a time) and place them out in healthy cottages contiguous to some common playground, providing them with board, lodging, bracing air, and opportunity for healthy exercise for a fortnight, the children from time to time being visited and gathered occasionally in the park and grounds of the family mansion for a jollification. Blanched cheeks attained to the rosy, limp forms became elastic, the spiritless became animated, and if one could coin the children's feelings into some definite expression, it would be, "God bless Miss Courtauld!" The schools which have enjoyed this privilege are Lambeth, New Tothill Street, Walker Street, Nelson Street, King Edward Street, Chequer Alley, Fox Court, Ratcliff, Gray's Yard, Lamb and Flag, and Holloway. Deptford and Little Saffron Hill also had the offer.

Another lady in Halstead has taken two children for the same period. We hope another year to see this done on a larger scale.

TESTIMONIALS, PRIZES, AND PRESENTATIONS.

Hope Schools, Chequer Alley.

The annual meeting for the distribution of prizes to the children for flowers or handiwork, and for regular attendance at the Night School, and also the prizes given by the Ragged School Union for good conduct, held on July 6th, possessed an additional interest this year, inasmuch as the usual programme was varied by the presentation of testimonials to some of the workers from those who had benefited by the mission. The proceedings began as usual by tea to the parents, nearly 300 being present. After this had been satisfactorily disposed of the chair was taken by the vice-president, Mr. R. R. Glover, and, after praise and prayer, Mr. R. J. Moser gave away the prizes—upwards of 100 in number—to those who had exhibited either plants grown by themselves or some piece of handiwork. This was followed by the prizes for attendance at the Week Night School taught during the winter—some 35—and the Ragged School Union prizes. Mr. Glover then, in the name of the women attending the Mothers' Meetings, presented gold pencil-cases to

Misses Bennett, James, and Ogilvy, as tokens of the appreciation with which their efforts are regarded by those who attend these meetings. But as soon as he had sat down the Hon. Secretary of the Mission stepped on to the platform, and presented the Chairman with a handsome silver inkstand, subscribed for by upwards of 200 friends connected with the Mission as a mark of their personal regard for him and their gratitude for the unvaried interest he had taken in their temporal and spiritual welfare during the last fourteen years. Mr. Glover, to whom this unexpected gift was a great surprise, showed some confusion of feeling owing to his having jocosely remarked to the ladies how happy he should feel if he were one of the gifted number. He, however, soon recovered his wonted confidence, and in his bright and happy way thanked the subscribers for the gift. We cannot help referring to this as a most pleasing episode in connection with the history of the Mission. It is gratifying to those who have received these testimonials, not for their intrinsic value, but as showing that their services, though obscure they may be, and often apparently thankless, are valued by those among whom they labour, but doubly gratifying, we venture to think, because it shows that even among the very poor there is the desire to show their gratitude in some tangible way, at the cost, we know, of considerable self-denial.

Testimonial to Mr. Watson on his Retirement from Hamond Square School after Twenty-four Years' Service.

On Sunday, March 20, 1881, at the close of the afternoon school, a meeting of present and former teachers was held for the purpose of presenting Mr. Clement Watson with a testimonial on the occasion of his leaving the school after having been connected with it in the various capacities of Class-teacher, Secretary, and Superintendent for twenty-four years (1857-81). Mr. F. Ramsey, who presided, referred to the devoted labours of Mr. Watson in the past, when there was much hard work to be done, and read the testimonial, which, after alluding to his long and faithful services, and expressing thankfulness to God for having so long permitted him to exercise his gifts in this school, concluded with the prayer that when his work on earth was done there might be many from Hamond Square and elsewhere who should be his joy and crown of rejoicing. This address was signed by all the teachers. Accompanying the testimonial was a copy of "Young's Analytical Concordance" and "Geikie's Life of Christ." Mr. Watson, in replying, after thanking the teachers for this fresh proof of their kindly feeling, referred to some incidents in connection with Hamond Square work in the earlier days of the school,

during the time of Messrs. Ansell, Aldridge, and others, who are now gone. He had experienced much blessing from his work there, and could confidently say, from the statements and letters of some who had been scholars, that his labours had not been in vain. He much regretted having to leave the school, but was compelled to do so by his removal to Leyton. He prayed that God's blessing might be with the school in the future even more than in the past.

FLOWER SHOWS AND INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITIONS.

Love Lane, Shadwell, Mission.

In the mission room on July 27th, 28th, and 29th was held a flower show and exhibition of needlework, models, drawings, &c. This interesting exhibition was promoted by the missionary, Mr. Harris, with a view to encourage the people of the district in the cultivation of plants, and in works of industry and art. The result has proved the effort to be of great good and service to the people, as in every way the show was a success. During the three days there was an average daily admission of not less than 600 persons, and on the last day prizes to the amount of £10, most kindly and generously provided by Mr. C. E. Seth Smith, were distributed by his sister, Miss Gertrude Seth Smith, assisted by Miss Dobell. Fifty-eight exhibitors received prizes with award cards, and fifty received certificates of honourable mention.

The exhibition contained 340 plants, 100 specimens of needlework, 50 drawings, and 27 models, which were exhibited by 200 persons from the immediate neighbourhood. Several other curiosities of foreign make—foreign plants, drawings, models, pictures, &c.—were lent in order to add variety and beauty to the occasion. The admission was by payment of one penny or a halfpenny each, exhibitors being admitted free; this produced £4 19s. 5d., and with a donation of £1 from a friend, the cost was defrayed without encroaching on the general funds of the Mission.

Nelson Street.

An attempt has been made for the first time to have an Industrial Exhibition in the school. Notice was given to the children early in the year, and some of them made articles of clothing, fancy boxes, doll furniture, &c. These were shown with other articles of curiosity lent by friends, on Monday evening, August 15th, when an address was given by Mr. C. A. Parker, and prizes were distributed to successful exhibitors by Mrs. Kirk. The experiment will be renewed another year, and it is hoped with greater results.

ONE TUN RAGGED SCHOOLS.

This year was held the usual exhibition of plants reared by the children in their homes. It was a goodly show, highly gratifying to the noble Earl who presented and distributed the prizes to the successful competitors.

KENTISH TOWN

has maintained its first love for flower shows, and this year its exhibition was no whit behind its predecessors. Mr. James and the friends of Rochester Row were busy, as usual, to make the show a success, and their labours met their deserved reward.

A FLOWER SERVICE.

A MORE unromantic place than King Edward Street, Spitalfields, it would be impossible to conceive; yet here on Sunday, July 24th, took place one of those pleasant sights—which in the fashionable suburbs are so delightful, but which in this abode of squalour and poverty seemed like an oasis in the desert—a Flower Service. The idea having occurred to the worthy superintendent of the King Edward Street Ragged Schools, he summoned all his friends, and with their assistance, invited the philanthropic to aid him with their subscriptions in giving one of these beautiful sights to the poor denizens of this dismal district, and liberal indeed were the responses. From three o'clock in the morning till eleven o'clock on Saturday night, the superintendent and his band of willing assistants were busy transforming the large but prosaic schoolroom into a perfect bower of flowers, and, "as by a touch of an enchanter's wand," the very atmosphere of the murky neighbourhood was laden with delicious perfumes. From the ceiling hung several wire baskets filled with ferns and flowers and creeping plants, the walls and gas-brackets were almost hidden with evergreens and nosegays, whilst at different parts of the room some garden arches, kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. Aylmer, of Whitechapel Road, were placed, entwined with ivy and Virginia creeper. Considerable ingenuity was exercised in constructing the "pulpit" at one end of the room, the choicest flowers, exotics, and evergreens being tastefully grouped on an elevated platform, the desk being surrounded with another arch ornamented with creeping plants and various specimens of fruit. Over the platform was a device worked in different blossoms to form the letter S, in honour of the Earl of Shaftesbury, the President of the School, who sent a very kind letter and a donation, as he was unable to be present. An address was delivered in the

evening by Mr. Eastman. The following well-known friends of the Ragged School cause assisted at the services :— Messrs. H. R. Williams, J. H. Lloyd, J. G. Gent, R. J. Curtis, C. Montague, J. Bellamy, D. Flack, and Mr. Robert Biggs. Mr. Montague said that at the morning, afternoon, and evening services the children, teachers, and friends had received presents of flowers. The sick poor of the district were visited in their homes, and each were presented with a bunch, and also with a beautifully illuminated card, with the text, "For God so loved the world," and a statement that the flowers were sent with the best wishes of the friends of the King Edward Ragged Schools.

OUTLINE OF THE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. EUSTACE J. EASTMAN AT THE KING EDWARD RAGGED SCHOOL FLOWER SERVICE,

ON THE EVENING OF SUNDAY, JULY 24*th*, 1881.

"The flowers appear on the earth."—Song of Solomon ii. 12.

THE flowers appear on the earth. Why? With what *purpose* has God, who never makes anything without a mission, clothed the earth with flowers?

The first, the child's answer, would be, that He has given them to please and gladden us. True, and it is much. It should set us asking ourselves whether we have done anything in return to please and gladden *God*, or whether we have been willing to *receive* without *giving*.

But this is not, we think, the only or chief purpose of the flowers. They are sent to be our teachers; to speak to us of God; to explain to us something of that unseen kingdom which lies around and within us; to be to us, as they were in Christ's hands, the texts of some of God's sweetest sermons; and to help us to adorn our lives, as they adorn the earth, with beauty and perfume.

We want the flowers to be our teachers to-night, or rather we ask God Himself to teach us, by these His ministers, which, if we can and will but understand them aright, will speak to us with no uncertain voice the truth of God concerning that spiritual world, of which the natural is the type and symbol.

The great German poet has made the *Earth Spirit* to say—

> "'Tis thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,
> *And weave for God the garment thou see'st Him by.*"

The flowers are God's handwriting; Christ read it, and first set us studying its alphabet. To-night, therefore, we join to ask God in

Christ to speak to us by these flowers; while we forget one another, and all but God and God's flowers, let us listen for *His* voice.

First, then, we take this flower in our hand, and ask it how it came *to be*, in all its beauty; what was its *beginning?* Surely, we say (speaking as learners, knowing nothing as yet), surely the most skilful of hands, with the most delicate of materials and the finest of instruments, cut out and put together all these parts, making up within one blossom a very world of perfect and beauteous life. In the quietest of workshops, we say, free from stain of dust, or breath of wind, the work must have been done. Speak, flower! and tell us. And this strange answer comes: "I was once a little brown seed; homeless, helpless, and, until certain conditions were fulfilled, useless." Strange! just what we have often said of ourselves—homely, helpless, and, we fear, useless. If only we were clever, beautiful, rich, strong, *then* we would make the world brighter and better for our presence; but, yes! that's just it, we are homely, helpless, *useless*. So was the seed from which this flower has come; but, *somehow*, the little brown seed *has* become the beautiful, perfect flower. Perhaps, in telling us *how*, it may help us to see how *we* may become better too.

We ask it *how* and *where* the change came about, and the answer is again a strange one. "I was put in the earth, in the dirt, and left there." And again we feel that this flower, in telling us its story, is also telling us our own. We, too, have been put in plain, dark, rough places; our surroundings are so unlovely, often so impure, that we have said it was impossible for us to be better there. But the flower has *done* it. Out of the plain, damp earth it has drawn the means of living, and has, by God's great rule of "give and take," repaid the earth's gifts by adorning it with beauty. And the flower tells us that our lot in life, despised and murmured at, may, if it be the one God has chosen for us, yield us the very means of a better life, and the opportunities of doing good; and we, too, drawing from our commonplace lot the good which God has stored there, may make it lovely with the "beauty of holiness." But *how?* Here again the flower must teach us. Its answer is that in the little brown seed was the germ of life. But the germ must be quickened, and the earth-influences, and the sunshine, the shower, and the breath of heaven, must all lend their help. So God's Spirit must come into our souls to quicken into newness of life the germ within. We cannot explain how, any more than we can explain how the life of the seed develops. But the one is as sure as the other. Christ must be "in us," the hope of "glory"—the glory of perfect and fadeless bloom.

Slowly grow the flowers. Not in a day or a year shall we be made perfect; but little by little shall the end be gained.

But that word "end" saddens us. The *end* of the flowers; they will fade, and droop, and die. Is that to be our end too? No; this, like all parables, gives only a *part* of the truth. "How much" are we "better than" the flowers? There is a *heavenly* garden, whose brightest blossoms have been *transplanted* from earth by the Great Master. In that garden there is a place for you and for me. Whether we shall, in the love of God in Christ, bloom there beside the "Rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley" rests with ourselves. All that is needed outside of us God gives, but we, again unlike the seed, must *ourselves* work for the end. May we here "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," and there, where

". . . everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers,"

add to the glory of that heavenly land, where dwells and reigns "the King in His beauty."

Before we leave the flowers for to-night, shall we not resolve that we will in the time to come let them be our more frequent teachers? Thank God, man has not been able to make them too costly for our possession. Let us take them into our homes, and, in their culture and growth, listen to the voice of God by these His ministers. They will make our homes brighter, our thoughts purer, ourselves more gentle; and, leading up our thoughts and love to their God and ours, will accomplish in us *His* pleasure, for whose glory they and we were created.

SCHOLARS' PRIZES FOR THE YEAR 1881.

THE Committee of the Ragged School Union, being desirous to encourage good conduct and long-continued service in all who have passed through the Schools of the Union, have again decided on giving Prizes to young persons of both sexes who have kept their situations with good character for twelve months and upwards, and coming within the following conditions, viz.:—

1. They must be over twelve and under eighteen years of age (*no limitation as regards wages*).

2. They must have attended the Ragged School or Institution giving the recommendation at least six months *previously* to having entered their first situation.

3. Having kept one situation for twelve months, ending in 1880, they are allowed to make one change, but must not be out of place for more than two weeks; in this case they are eligible for the Prize, provided they are in the second place on December 31st, 1881. Certificates of character will be required from both situations.

4. If they have not before received a money Prize, they will now be entitled to a Prize of Seven Shillings and Sixpence, as well as a Card, provided the Committee of the School recommending them will pay Two Shillings and Sixpence of this sum.

5. Those who have received a money Prize previously, and are again recommended, will be entitled to an Illuminated Card, and a Prize Book.

6. They must have been in regular attendance at the Ragged or other Sunday School for the *current* year. This rule does not apply to domestic servants (*male or female*).

7. Shoeblacks, occasional labourers, scholars partially employed, those engaged by their relatives, or girls working in jute and cartridge factories, will not be eligible for the Prizes.

8. Certificates must be furnished by the employers and school authorities, to show that these conditions have been complied with, and that good conduct has been continued to December 31st, 1881.

9. The candidate will lose the benefit of the Prize if the application paper be not fully and accurately filled up, duly signed, and returned to the Office, Exeter Hall, on or before January 28th, 1882.

The Prizes may be given in Books, Clothes, or otherwise, as the Committee of the School may determine.

Application papers may be had *early in December*.

Exeter Hall, August, 1881. JOHN KIRK, Secretary.

CHRISTIAN BANDS.

As the formation of Bands of young converts, or the inauguration of Juvenile Churches, is becoming a practical affair, some of those who are inclined to look askant at the movement would do well to ponder the following, by Mr. T. B. Bishop.

Thirty Reasons why the early Conversion of Children should engage the attention of every true Christian.

1. Because children are sinners and may be lost.
2. Because Jesus Christ died for them, and they may be saved.
3. Because the simple plan of salvation through faith in Christ is the same for children as for grown-up people.
4. Because very many dear children have found the Saviour, and are now happy in His love.
5. Because the Holy Spirit is striving in the hearts of many more.
6. Because it is constantly found that there are little ones who want to come to Jesus, but who do not know the way.
7. Because they are not *safe* until they have come.
8. Because the child's heart is tender, and not yet hardened by a long course of sin.

9. Because the child receives the truth in more simple faith than the adult.

10. Because it is *easy* for children to *love*, and therefore they may be taught to love Jesus.

11. Because it is *easy* for children to *trust*, and so they may be led to trust in Jesus.

12. Because our Lord himself tells us that there are "little ones who believe" in Him.

13. Because those converted in early life make the most *earnest* and *consistent* Christians.

14. Because those who spend their youthful days in learning in Christ's school will become the *wisest* Christians.

15. Because, having life before them, they are likely to become the most *useful* Christians.

16. Because we now have the children with us, and it is *easy* to get them to listen to the story of the cross.

17. Because when they grow up to be young men and women it will be very *difficult* to reach them.

18. Because thousands of children leave our Sunday Schools at thirteen or fourteen and leave them unconverted.

19. Because it is a startling fact that numbers of these old Sunday scholars are to be found amongst the criminals in our gaols, and the unfortunates on our streets.

20. Because we live in a fast age, when children rapidly learn the manners, and too often imitate the vices, of grown-up people.

21. Because these children *may* become the fathers and mothers of the next generation.

22. Because they *may* die while they are still young.

23. Because the Lord *may come*, and none of them may ever grow up to be men and women.

24. Because children may be so readily gathered together in the schoolroom, the cottage, or the drawing room; in the open air, and by the sea-shore.

25. Because a little book or tract given to a child will always be accepted and *read*, which is not always the case with grown-up people.

26. Because a letter written to a child is sure to be treasured up and read again and again.

27. Because a word can be spoken with freedom to a child, and all of us meet with children sometimes, and have many opportunities of individually pointing them to Jesus.

28 Because this work amongst the young does not want special gifts so much as earnestness and love to souls.

29. Because it is a work that brings us so near to Christ.

30. Because the lambs are so dear to the heart of the good Shepherd, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

FUNDS.

The present condition of the resources of the Ragged School Union is not devoid of anxiety to the Committee of Management.

The outgoings have largely exceeded the incomings month by month, and this has culminated in the necessity for the sale of some of the Society's Reserve Fund, an order for which was passed at the Committee Meeting in August to meet the claims then due.

A similar depression was experienced last year, when our noble President and Miss Hesba Stretton both pleaded effectively for the little neglected children in the Ragged Schools.

This was admirably supplemented by our respected treasurer, Mr. R. C. L. Bevan, who kindly offered to give the sum of £100 on condition that nine similar gifts were contributed. This challenge was generously met, and the result to our funds was an additional thousand pounds.

Encouraged by this success, a "Friend in the Eastern Counties," who has remained steadfast in her allegiance to our cause for many years past, very kindly promised a contribution of fifty pounds, with the proviso that nine other fifties should be forthcoming before the end of June last.

Yet another offer came of *five pounds*, on the understanding that the money be paid if nine friends would give a like sum.

The ten gifts of five pounds were quickly realised, but no response came to the offer of £50, and the lady has most kindly agreed to extend the time to the end of the year. Will our readers kindly assist in enabling the Committee to claim the offered fifty pounds, or in any other way, so that the good work of Ragged Schools may not languish for lack of pecuniary support or spiritual results?

FROST AND SNOW.

"I was naked and ye clothed Me."

In past years, as winter approached, the Union has received from kind friends many tokens of their thoughtfulness for our poor children and their parents.

Material for clothing, articles ready made, old clothes, and gifts in money have been sent, which have furnished covering and warmth to those of tender or mature years.

A continuance of such favours is solicited, with this assurance—that all articles forwarded to the office of the Ragged School Union, Exeter Hall, Strand, will be duly acknowledged and distributed amongst the most needy.

NIGHT SCHOOLS.

We have arrived now at the month for the resumption of School and Institute work. Mr. R. J. Curtis will be glad to confer with any friends on these matters *by letter, or at the office by appointment.*

There is a large residuum of youth of both sexes, and those also verging on adult life, to whom the three R's are a *terra incognita.*

There are noble-minded teachers who will feel a pleasure in helping those who have been left behind in the great educational race.

These are they who may be included in the description, "Darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Not to read or write in these days is next to the want of bodily sight. An open Bible is no use to such; they *cannot* search the Scriptures. Our indifference is a Papal interdict.

PROPOSED CANVASS FOR 1882.

The Committee of the Sunday School Union are urging the importance of a canvass for the metropolis. That it is needed will be patent to all. A growing indifference to the Sabbath has led to great laxity as regards its observance by children. Besides this, an enforced attendance at day school has not helped to make matters better. There are many thousands who do not attend a Sunday School.

Some one will say, What about teachers? We are assured that the last canvass was attended by a proportionate increase of them.

It is hoped that our Ragged School friends in their respective neighbourhoods will not be slow to follow so excellent a suggestion.

DAYS OF SPECIAL PRAYER.

Sunday, the 16th, and Monday, the 17th of October, have been set apart by the Sunday School Union for public and private prayer for the Divine blessing on the work of teaching the young. We are living in trying times, and it behoves us all to strengthen ourselves through experience in the efficacy of prayer.

"For Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Ragged School teachers are engaged on a work which is even more arduous than that of the ordinary Sunday School teacher. It behoves them, therefore, to avail themselves of such special seasons for imploring the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on themselves and the children to whom they minister. Our teachers, we hope, will therefore sacredly remember the above dates.

HOW A LITTLE CHILD'S PRAYER WAS ANSWERED.

In one of the villages of Upper Silesia, a poor widow was lying sick in bed, when suddenly some Bavarian soldiers entered her room, and demanded bread, meat, and beer, declaring they would not go until she had supplied their wants. Trembling with fear, the poor woman told them that she had not even bread enough in the house to satisfy their own hunger. Wild with rage, the soldiers began to smash tables and chairs, swearing, and threatening to beat her if she did not at once supply their wants.

At this moment a little boy, about four years of age, who, when the soldiers came in, had rushed behind the stove in terror, now came forward, and, kneeling down at the side of it, clasped his tiny hands together, and, with tears rolling down his cheeks, said, "*Oh, dear, kind Jesus, don't let them beat mother! Make them good to her, and then bless them.*"

One of the soldiers, whilst listening to the child's prayer, began to cry, and at last said, "Comrades, let us go elsewhere. In a house where a pious child is, there God Himself dwells." Then, taking the child's little hand in his, he closed the fingers upon a couple of two-groschen pieces, and hastily left the room, followed by the rest.—*From the "Little Soldier."*

WINTER EVENING ENTERTAINMENTS FOR THE POOR.

Chequer Alley Mission, Bunhill Row, St. Luke's, E.C.

The committee of management, fully recognising the palpable fact that recreation is a necessity of human nature in the stress and strain of a bustling life such as ours, and especially in the irksome and oppressive conditions in which the poor wear out their days, provide, once a week, from October to April, an entertainment, consisting of a concert; a lecture, sometimes illustrated by dissolving views; or readings and recitations, serious and humorous, interspersed with songs, sentimental and comic.

The endeavour, all through, is to supply wholesome diversion, which shall be cheerful without coarseness; and instruction, which shall be pleasing without dulness. The aim is to arouse often

> "Mirth, that wrinkled Care derides,
> And Laughter holding both his sides."

But it must be

> "Mirth, that after, no repenting draws."

No quarter is given to merriment that is excited by a jest that

borders on vulgarity, that violates propriety, or that irreverently touches those precious things which are committed to man's most sacred keeping.

Music, the ancient and ever-living delight of mankind, naturally, and of right, leads the way, and keeps the lead, never falling before any other form of entertainment that may compete with it in friendly rivalry.

And so it comes to pass that, in the dreary months of winter, amid the squalor of a London alley, the day's humdrum moiling, domestic and other, over, there is a welcome following of the poor people, whose good hap it is to listen to their more cultured brothers and sisters, skilled in music, instrumental and vocal, and other accomplishments—the kind executants vying with each other in furnishing their humble audiences with a superior style of pleasing recreation. The response has been clearly read in the eager faces and the unstinted ringing cheers of those who have flocked to hear.

The evening is Tuesday; the chair is taken at a quarter-past eight; the admission is quite free; but, to keep out the disturbing element, a prohibitive charge is made of a penny to youngsters under fourteen; and, shortly after ten, the audience jogs cheerily homewards.

These meetings of the more favoured classes with those whose hard lot places them at a wide distance from the refining influences of a higher sphere, excite on the one side the happiness of those who of their gifts minister to the less favoured of their fellow-creatures; and in the other the sense of a sweet human sympathy that cares not only for their hard wants, but extends to their delight, and brings to them in the shade where they dwell some rays of sunshine that may, for a pleasant while, dispel the clouds that hang upon them, enliven their depression, relieve their languor, and lighten the heavings that weigh down their hearts.

Moreover, these social gatherings, it is not doubted, have the happy and every way desirable effect of endearing the Mission to those whom it aims persistently in other ways—reaching through lower wants to the highest and divinest things—to bless; embracing in these efforts both the earthward and the heavenward needs of the neglected, unfriended, degraded children of suffering and want.

In Memoriam.

LORD HATHERLEY.
MR. GEORGE BONSEY.

LORD HATHERLEY.

The death of this eminent Sunday School teacher of forty years' standing, whose interest in his scholars was not confined to the Sabbath, but extended over the whole of their daily life, has called forth the sincere regret of all sections of the Church of Christ. He was a fine illustration of the power of Christianity to adorn and ennoble the higher walks of society. His relation to the Ragged School Union as one of its vice-presidents induced the Committee at their last meeting to embody their regret in the following resolution: "The Committee records with great sorrow the loss of Lord Hatherley, one of the vice-presidents of the Union, formerly Lord Chancellor of England, who, whilst by his great learning, earnest labours, and conscientious performance of duty, rose to the highest eminence in his profession, counted it an honour and a pleasure to be a diligent Sunday-school teacher, allowing no other duty to interfere with service to his Master, and exhibiting in every relation of life a bright example of sanctified learning and Christian piety."

MR. GEORGE BONSEY.

This capable and indefatigable labourer in Ragged School work, who succeeded the well-known W. H. Miller in the superintendency of Lambeth Ragged School, succumbed to a most protracted and painful disorder on Wednesday, August 17th, in his forty-third year. He fought bravely with his terrible malady—his soul soared and sung over a species of bodily martyrdom. For five-and-twenty years on every possible occasion he was present at the school. He had a talent for the control of large numbers. On the most trying occasions, such as a Christmas dinner or a magic-lantern entertainment, when the room was crowded, and youthful spirits ran high in their merriment, when disorder, grown confident, shouted and disported itself most riotously, fancying itself shielded by twilight or distance, the sound of his bell acted as potently as the wand of a magician. The storm became a calm.

His dying utterances were expressions of concern for the welfare of his beloved school.

He has entered into rest—blessed rest! He has been preceded and, we trust, will be followed, by many who will be his joy and crown of rejoicing in the great day of account.

With his desolate widow we affectionately sympathise; she has a claim on our regard for having so ably seconded her late husband in all his works of love.

Notices of Books.

Men Worth Remembering. Series of Popular Biographies, 2s. 6d. each. (Hodder and Stoughton, Paternoster Row.)

It was a happy thought of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton to follow in the wake of "Classics for English Readers" and "English Men of Letters" with this praiseworthy record of eminent divines, great religious reformers, and saintly laymen.

Philosophers and eminent literary men of ancient and modern times having had their lives and works prosented to the public in a compact and attractive form, it seemed most fitting that men of the higher walks of religion and philanthropy should be similarly noticed.

Dr. Chalmers, by the Rev. Donald Frazer, D.D., and Stephen Grellet, by William Guest, are fine examples of the minister and the layman. Their unremitting labours for man's wellbeing and God's glory show that we too under the same inspiration

"May make our lives sublime."

Christian young men owe a debt of gratitude to the publishers for presenting the lives of men so full of motive power, and whose examples are so stimulating and contagious.

Hymns for the Use of Christian Associations, Evangelistic Services, &c. New and enlarged edition, price 4d. (Hodder and Stoughton, Paternoster Row.)

This hymn-book was specially prepared for the use of Young Men's Christian Associations. Messrs. W. Edwin Shipton and W. Hind Smith have both more or less superintended the selection.

Watts, Wesley, and Doddridge are great favourites with the compilers, and justly so, for their hymns have stood the test of time, have engraven themselves on the heart of the church, are embodiments of precious truths and life-giving doctrines with whose nectar millions of souls have been nourished.

Wisely, to the appendix have been added those hymns of recent

times that have met the wants of Christian communities for mission and revival services. These have become household words, are heard in the streets being quietly sung on their busy or joyous way by youths and children—divine words that to a large degree have driven away from the lips of the young the doggrel of low music halls.

The Little Soldier. Weekly, one halfpenny. (Mr. Booth, 101, Victoria Street.)

This is a sequel to the *War Cry*, and is intended to excite and deepen a religious interest on behalf of young children. The instances of early conversion are numerous. Children being loving, sympathetic, and emotional, God not having been expelled from their souls by evil courses, are more amenable to spiritual influences than those of riper years. Religion is a thing of the heart, is a matter of daily experience. It is not biographic or historic details, nor matters of geographical or topographical interest; it relates to something deeper. Whatever may be the matter in hand, to this serious view all must revert. The pedigree of David may be interesting, and his romantic history more so; but the question is, What about David's Lord? Is he formed in the heart the hope of glory? This is the Christian view of the renewal of God's image in the soul. *The Little Soldier* shows that when those who are converted seek the conversion of others some fruits are likely to follow. A word to our earnest friends, "Watch the Fruit."

Notices of Meetings.

LONDON STREET SCHOOLS AND MISSION.

The seventeenth annual meeting of the above schools and mission was held recently at the Drill Hall, Bermondsey, under the presidency of Mr. Percy Brown.

The secretary read the annual report, which comprised the following amongst other details:—

"The rooms of the new building are well used; and although there was a sameness of the plans in operation, the work was not stationary. Mr. Ryall liked new as well as old schemes. The Sunday School steadily and increasingly pursues its way amidst all its difficulties. In the year 1864 Mr. Colby, assisted by 5 helpers, opened this school with 9 scholars, and now it numbers 300 with 19 teachers, the average attendance being about 260. During the past year two senior scholars had become teachers. Two of the scholars had received prizes in connection with the Scripture examination. The annual summer excursion was attended by 290 scholars, who thoroughly enjoyed themselves. During the year a banner had been pur-

chased, and it was borne to Southwark Park on the occasion of the Sunday School Centenary demonstration, at which 150 of the scholars of this school attended. Some of the boys connected with the school are of the poorest in the neighbourhood, and have suffered much during the winter months. They have been in many cases supplied with bread and coffee before leaving school, a gift they had highly appreciated. Shoe-making and mat-making had also been taught to some, who had thereby been enabled to earn a trifle. Bands of Hope had been inaugurated by Messrs. Carlile and Spencer, and the Brass Band had made considerable progress during the year, and had proved a means of keeping youths, 18 years of age, in the Sunday School, and engaged in Christian work—a task by no means easy. To be a member of this band involves total abstinence from intoxicants, and yet the band numbers 18 members, 4 of whom were tract distributors, 2 officers of the Band of Hope, and 1 took charge of the Sunday evening collection. Mr. Welsh had ably filled the post of conductor. The Sunday evening services had been well attended, a large number of tracts had been given away, and others circulated on loan; open-air meetings had been held, at which there had been an average attendance of 120 persons. During the year there had been 230 gallons of soup given to the poor.

"The income of the mission had been £133 9s. 5d., and the expenditure during the year £145 15s. 3½d."

Major Bevington said he was glad to find this mission in such a satisfactory condition. In the present condition of society there were many forces which tended to sever its bonds, and so at times tend to evil. The societies in existence of a kind similar to London Street were most beneficial. He had known Mr. Ryall for a great many years, and was quite sure that his heart was in the work in which he was engaged, and that he did not think so much of the money as he did of the work in which he felt the lives and comfort of his fellows were at stake.

Mr. Gawin Kirkham, secretary of the Open Air Mission, ably addressed the meeting.

Mr. Curtis, one of the secretaries of the Ragged School Union, said that the mission had to do with young and old life, with the child and the parent, with the body and the soul, with time and eternity. It recognised the fact that one cannot always be at work; that there was a time to play. Those present must know that the work was a pleasant one, for to deal with young life reminded one of spring time and all its beauties. It was also a blessed work because it conferred a blessing, and those engaged in it realised the truth of the saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The workers were animated by the best of motives. "The love of Christ constraineth us," "We love Him because He first loved us," were the mottoes which they placed before them.

Mr. J. Culver, who attended as a deputation from the Bermondsey Auxiliary Sunday School Union, said he knew the mission was doing a great and good work, and it gave him great pleasure to help in the same.

Mr. Ryall was received with loud and continuous applause. He said

he hardly knew where to begin, he had so much to say. He thanked them for the support they had that evening rendered. He had no doubt many had come that evening because he was such a "rum" fellow, and many could not make out what was the mainspring of the success of the mission. He believed it was because he was in full sympathy with the ragged boys of London Street. He did not know that there was a worse set of boys in England than some with whom he had to deal, but he had learned to bear with them because he was once as bad as them, and so could feel for them. When he considered the way along which God had led him, he had patience to bear with those who were "hard up;" in fact he liked them better than those who were well off. The speaker then related a circumstance which occurred in his early life, when, friendless and alone, he had determined to end his miserable career, when Providence mercifully interposed. Hence he could well understand the position occupied by many connected with the mission, and by the help of God he would continue until called away from earth. He again thanked them for the support rendered to the Mission, but would remind them that he gained nothing by the work, and when any poor, hungry lad came to London Street he could not shut the door in his face; if there was a shilling in the house he must give it him; thus London Street Mission went on.

GRAY'S YARD EXCURSION.

Three hundred children and thirty teachers on July 11th were taken to Neasden, and, under the supervision of the secretaries, spent the day merrily, in a field kindly lent for the purpose. The swings, free of charge, were continuously employed; the younger children engaged themselves in gathering wild flowers, and during the whole of the afternoon the sports included running races, walking races, hurdle races, sack races, one-legged races, three-legged races, &c., for boys over and under ten years of age; running races, skipping-rope races, French rope, &c., for girls over and under ten years of age. Mr. Edmunds acted as starter, and presented prizes to the successful competitors, including purses, pairs of scissors, pencils, one and two-bladed pocket-knives, pocket-books, &c. At noon the children were regaled with pork pies and apple-tarts, and at 4.30 with tea, bread and butter, and cake, in abundance. A large crate of toys was sold to the younger children at merely nominal prices.

BEN JONSON MISSION SCHOOL.

The sixth annual excursion in connection with the above took place on Wednesday, Aug. 17th, to Rye House, when some 328 children and 50 parents and friends enjoyed (notwithstanding several showers) a very pleasant day at that beautiful resort. The arrangements by the proprietors were carried out most satisfactorily.

NELSON STREET RAGGED SCHOOL AND MISSION.

A garden party of the workers and teachers connected with the above mission was held on Thursday, in the grounds of Colonel Puget's estate, the Grove, Totteridge, Herts. A most enjoyable day was spent, the charming grounds and the

various sports provided for the amusement of the visitors giving the utmost pleasure and amusement. In the course of the day an address was given by Mr. Herbert Taylor, son-in-law of Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., on the words "I go fishing." An interesting address was also given by Mr. Kirk, hon. sec. to the mission, on the origin and progress of the Nelson Street School. Tea was provided in a marquee erected in the grounds.

GEORGE YARD RAGGED SCHOOLS AND MISSION.

The annual meeting was held recently. Among those present were Lord Shaftesbury, in the chair; the Dowager Lady Beauclerc, Hon. C. Beauchamp, Hon. Lionel Ashley, R. L. Lankester, Esq., Sir R. W. Carden, Rev. J. A. Robinson (rector of Whitechapel), Lady Hobart, &c.

The donations and subscriptions for 1880 amounted to £1,240 13s. 4½d., expenses £1,157 12s. 2½d.

Mr. G. Holland read the annual report.

The speakers were the Rev. Mr. Robinson, the Rev. Mr. Thomas, Mr. R. J. Curtis (Ragged School Union), Sir Robert Carden, and Messrs. Wright and Mackenzie.

Mr. Wright said he had been converted in that building, and he was now a minister of the Gospel in Suffolk. (Applause.)

Lord Shaftesbury said he was always pleased to come. He could not remember how many times, but he remembered Mr. Champneys, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Kitto, and many other able clergymen in Whitechapel who had helped in this work. The report was a very remarkable one, referring to almost everything which could be done for the people. Cleanliness was impossible in some parts of London. Young women came up from the country and got into the beastly rooms that were let out as lodgings, and who, after trying to rub things clean, had to sit down in the midst of dirt, hopeless and habituated to it. They could do nothing in improving the people generally till there were everywhere healthy houses and a pure supply of water.

BRISTOL RAGGED SCHOOL SOCIETY.

The thirty-fourth annual meeting of the supporters of the above society was held, May 26, in the small Victoria Room, the Mayor of Bristol (Mr. J. D. Weston) presiding over a limited attendance.

Colonel Newbolt, one of the hon. secs., read the report, from which selections are given.

"In their last report allusion was made to the issue of a special appeal for funds, which the committee have pleasure in recording was fairly responded to. This extra help enables the society to start for the current year under more favourable financial prospects than last year. In the concluding remarks of their report for 1879, the committee recorded the great desire they had to help Sunday Schools in the poorest parishes. They are glad to be able to report that they have made a commencement in this direction by a grant of £5 to the Temple Sunday School. The committee have noticed with pleasure the honour done to Earl Shaftesbury in connection with the vigorous and devoted support his lordship has given to the cause of Ragged Schools during a long life. This society, while fully and gratefully acknowledging the

hand of our gracious God in sustaining and furthering this agency for good among the waifs and strays of the lanes and back slums of Bristol, would not forget to recognise the human agencies that have lent their valuable aid in the good cause."

The Mayor said at the present time there was a conference being held in the city respecting reformatories and kindred institutions, and no one could attend those meetings and hear the claims which those schools had on the sympathy of the public without feeling an increased interest in all Ragged Schools. In reference to the schools connected with that society, one had only to consider that the society had five schools in the most populous parts of the city, in which not less than 1,000 children were being taught, and to consider that the schools were open to all who came, however dirty or however ragged, to see they were doing a really good work. He recognised the great importance of religious teaching being associated with secular training. The more they contemplated the fact that the children educated in their schools came from hard, squalid homes, where almost natural affection was trodden under foot, the more they would see that it was not enough that the religious teaching should comprise only the cold, cold teaching of religious truths; it was not enough that the children should be taught their duties to God and man —the homes of these children being so destitute of everything that should cheer and brighten life, it was necessary that religious teaching should be given by loving voices.

The Rev. Armstrong Hall said many of the children attending his school were the children of gipsies, whose parents were driven into the towns by stress of weather for two or three weeks.

Mr. J. Kirk (secretary of the London Ragged School Union) took part in the meeting.

LAMBETH RAGGED SCHOOL SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this society was held recently at the Horns Assembly Rooms, Kennington Park. Lord Shaftesbury presided.

The annual report was read by the hon. secretary, Mr A. Sherwin. It stated that the past year had been one of successful labour, but full of difficulties and discouragements. Nothing was impossible with God, and the teachers were pleased to think that the fruits of their labour were to be found throughout the schools. Some of the scholars had joined neighbouring churches, and several had become teachers. The total amount of receipts from all sources during the year amounted to £53 10s., and the expenditure to £79 12s. 6d., leaving a balance due to the treasurer of £35 4s.

The Rev. Burman Cassin moved that the report and financial statement be adopted. He was of opinion that Ragged Schools were the first real cause of the great movement for education throughout England which had been made by the London School Board.

The Rev. E. McLean, J. Rhodes, and J. Marchant followed. After the distribution of prizes,

His lordship said Lambeth was one of the earliest districts he knew. Fifty years ago he used to visit the parish and dive into all its recesses; he then knew the greater part of

its population, and was acquainted with many of its characteristics. At that time Lambeth was a far different place from what it was now; it was like darkness compared to light. Lambeth, as well as all London, had improved, but if it had not been for Ragged Schools and other agencies he could name, Lambeth would not have been habitable to any civilised being. They had produced a better tone and feeling on the masses of London. The days of Ragged Schools were not over. Their great influence and power had passed away, but the day of their *necessity* was as ripe as ever.

Selections of vocal music were given by the children. Mr. T. Briant was the conductor, and Mr L. Briant the accompanist.

DEPTFORD RAGGED SCHOOL.

Some short time since the annual public meeting in support of the Deptford Ragged School was held in the Lecture Hall of Lewisham High Road Congregational Church. The Rev. G. Martin presided.

Mr. T. Arnold, the secretary, read the annual report. The superintendent of the Sunday School, in his review of the work of the year, reported that the classes proceeded satisfactorily. The attendance was stated to be good—viz., 200. To obtain teachers was still the most difficult part of the management. The appeal made last year, on the occasion of the annual meeting, for teachers, through the Earl of Shaftesbury (the chairman), resulted in adding two new teachers to the list, and one of these, sad to say, had since retired. A very strong and affecting appeal was made to brothers and sisters who felt the spirit of the love of Jesus stirring in their breasts, to join the small band of fifty-three teachers in a work which was essentially a labour of love, and one for the glory of His kingdom. A grant from the Ragged School Union had enabled the superintendent to add eighty volumes to the library. The Sunday Evening School had difficulty with regard to teachers; the attendance of scholars was good. It had been found impossible to adopt the system of teaching in class. In the Boys' Night (week-day) School the average attendance had been raised over that of last year, when it was 24. The Girls' Night School had an average attendance of 17. The Girls' Sewing Class was highly useful as an addition to the benefits given in the reading and writing classes. The Mothers' Meetings were well sustained, and four poor women were mentioned who had derived spiritual benefit from the lessons conveyed to them in this section. A successful tea-meeting was reported, when several ladies and gentlemen kindly sang. The summer excursion on the 3rd July was also a success. The Tuesday Evening Services have an average attendance of 57, which was an increase over the attendance of the previous year. Penny Bank: The amount in hand about the same as last year. The total amount received from the children in four years was £128 12s. 2d. A lecture on "Thrift," in connection with this department, was mentioned, and the Cricket and Football Club's performances were next referred to. A most pleasant report of the results of the Boot and Clothes Clubs' operations was made. The numbers

in the first had increased from 72 to 100, and the amount paid in by members from £8 13s. 10d. to £14 9s. 9d., the total of the pairs of boots supplied having also grown from 51 to 81. Much good had been done also in the distribution of parcels of clothing and of boots amongst some of the parents of the children. The Band of Hope meets fortnightly, with an average attendance of 25; and the Children's Flower Show, and distribution of seeds and plants in the spring, were stated to have been attended with good. From the reports received of former scholars who had gone to situations it appeared that a fair number were going on very well, some of them having been in one place for three or four years; and three were going up to the next meeting of the Union at Exeter Hall, to receive the prizes which are given annually to children who remain in one situation a year or longer. In closing the report, it was stated that the balance in the accounts was on the "right side," with the amount of £10 received through Lord Shaftesbury last year. The expenditure left a small balance of £21 in hand.

The chairman said it was a happy coincidence that the meeting was held so soon after that other meeting, which was a truly affecting and interesting day in the history of Ragged Schools—he alluded to the birthday, the eightieth, of the Earl of Shaftesbury, a noble friend of Ragged School children. That great man—whose name he loved, and whom he esteemed for his work's sake, for he had known him from boyhood, when, as Lord Ashley, he was doing a vast and noble work amongst the poorer classes of the metropolis. The Ragged School movement grew with rapidity, until at last it was calculated that at least 300,000 children had been taken off the streets by its means, and placed in honest employment. As the Earl had wisely said, "The friends of Ragged Schools were educating the children while politicians were thinking about how it could be done;" thus reversing and counteracting the appeals of the devil by sowing the good seed of religious truth while the nation itself was asleep. He admired and respected that great man for this, for his loyal allegiance to evangelical truth, unmoved by the sneer of "mouthing theologian;" for his loving following of the teaching of Christ his Master, for his enthusiasm in setting forth Christ and Him crucified, with devoted adherence to evangelical truth, and for his large-hearted and sympathetic benevolence. None could say his was a narrow creed, or that his was not a wide theology. If they did, the speaker would ask them to look at his life, and to say to those who despised creeds and deprecated theology, Were they doing a tithe of the work for the raising of the poor, and the leading of men and children from sin, that had been done by that grand old man, the Earl of Shaftesbury?

Mr. T. W. Marchant moved the first resolution, and Mr. J. Crowther seconded the adoption of the report.

The Rev. H. McIntosh gave a hearty support to the committee of the Ragged School in their efforts on behalf of the poor children of Deptford. One of the most powerful preachers whom he had

heard in Glasgow came from a Ragged School, and a member of the Presbytery he had last week visited was a respected evangelist, who had been rescued by the aid of a Ragged School. Another, who was a most effective preacher now, originally came from one of the "Wynds" of Glasgow.

Mr. Kirk, of the Ragged School Union, in an interesting address, touched on the history of the Ragged School movement.

FOX COURT.

The quarterly meeting of teachers and friends took place in the school-room on Tuesday, September 13th, 1881. The Rev. Mr. Harley occupied the chair, and gave an encouraging address. Mr. Fagg, the honorary secretary, detailed the various operations of the school, and appealed for more teachers for the Sunday and Week-night Schools. Mr. Boyd, of the Sunday School Union, urged the institution of a Christian Band for those scholars who gave evidence of decision for Christ. Several other friends spoke, including Mr. Kirk, Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Elcum, Mr. Williams, &c.

EAST GREENWICH RAGGED SCHOOLS.—GARDEN MEETING IN BLACKHEATH PARK.

The importance of the work going on in connection with the East Greenwich Ragged School cannot be too largely overrated. Those who are not intimately associated with the schools and their noble work would do well to recollect that in many cases "a painful work it is, and more than difficult, wherein what toil hath been taken no man thinketh, so no man believeth, but he that hath made the trial," and we feel satisfied that of all concerned the valued master of this healthy institution, Mr. Newton, has realised the truth of this theory. The day was well in accord with the object of the meeting, and as the visitor entered the delightful grounds of Mr. John Young, the language of Cowley seemed to come in its best light, for, said he—"We are here among the vast and noble scenes of nature, we walk in the light and open ways of the Divine bounty, our senses are here feasted with all the clear and genuine taste of their objects; here pleasure, methinks, looks like a beautiful, constant, and modest wife," and the words suffice to illustrate the grand lesson to be gained from gatherings of the kind of which we speak.

Lord Ashley, who occupied the chair, said,—Ladies and Gentlemen: I must congratulate you on the fine day we have for the holding of the meeting, and I am sure we ought to be especially grateful to Mr. Young for permitting us to be here. I feel it more especially myself, for it is, indeed, a pleasure for us jaded Londoners to leave our work and have a day in the country. I am sorry, indeed, that the attendance here of our old friend Mr. Newton is prevented through illness, but I trust his ailment will take a fast turn, and that he will soon be able to take his place among us. Looking over the annual report, which I have in my hand, I am glad to see that your institution is in such good working order. As a Christian duty to our countrymen, and out of the principles which ought to direct all good thinking men, we take in these children because the parents of the children will not take their care

upon themselves. If we do not look after those who are spiritually neglected, we share alike the guilt and sin of Cain. You are doing a good and exemplary work. These children are the future fathers and mothers of the Empire of England, and upon their training depends the future of the country, and if we do not look after them we are hastening the decline of this glorious old fatherland of ours. I am pleased to see that you sometimes give your children a happy day in the country, and I see from your report that on the 17th July of last year you held a garden meeting in the grounds of Mr. South, and that there the children were provided with tea and amusements; that at times you take them to the Zoological Gardens;—well, all this is quite right, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." The surest way to set aside dulness and melancholy is to give the people some little enjoyment. The more rational amusement you give these children the more you help them to set aside the vices to which they are prone, and above all that of intemperance. Honest poverty is a disgrace to no man. We are living in days when there is too much bowing down to the weight of the money bag. It is a great pleasure in seeing a Ragged School where it is practically needed, and every member of the commonwealth, whether rich, gentle, poor, or simple, could all help in assisting the cause.

Mr. Charles Stone, the hon. secretary, then read the annual report, of which the following is an abstract. "In presenting their annual report the committee record with gratitude, that by the blessing of Almighty God, the school has prospered greatly during the past year. The number of children on the roll has considerably increased, and the reports of the inspector, given below, show the efficiency of the instruction. A greater interest on the part of friends is evidenced by the additional number of visits paid during the year, and attention is called to the marked increase in the attendance at both the Sunday School and Sunday Evening Services. The teachers of the school are: Master—Mr. Newton. Governess—Miss Newton. Assistants—Misses Stephens and Couch. Mr. Newton has completed his 31st year as a master. The number of children on the roll is 260, as compared with 236 last year; and the average attendance 210, as compared with 200 last year. The total number of children admitted since the school was opened in 1847 is 6,037, *i.e.*, 3,178 boys and 2,859 girls. During the past year 61 visitors have called at the school. The Rev. B. Baring-Gould made the following entry in the visitors' book:—'I have been much pleased with the order and discipline evinced and by the intelligence of the children.' J. F. South remarks:—'This is the first time I have been in a Ragged School, and I was much pleased by the attention and good behaviour of the children.' On 23rd March the school was examined by Mr. R. J. Curtis, the inspector of the Ragged School Union, when the following excellent results were recorded:—Passed in reading, 138; writing, 131; arithmetic, 129; multiplication, 102; scripture, 102. The inspector remarks as follows:—'The order of the school during examination was most excellent. I am quite satisfied with the condition of the

school.' The last visit during 1880 made by the inspector was on Dec. 21st, when the following remarks were inserted:—'Present 225. School in excellent order. Spent an hour with the girls, questioned them on the Scriptures, the replies were prompt and most intelligent. They sang a song suitable to the season. The whole school at closing were marshalled into their places, where they stood in perfect order during singing and prayer. I remained till commencement of evening school, the boys big and of the right class for the Night School.' There has been a considerable increase in the attendance at the Sunday evening Children's Services during the last twelve months. The Sunday School is still superintended by Mr. Hutchinson, to whom, with his devoted body of teachers, the committee desire to express their gratitude for their self-denying efforts. The Refuge for Homeless Lads is managed entirely by Mr. Newton; the only qualifications are the destitution of applicants and their desire to reform. Since the commencement of the Refuge in 1861, 199 lads have found in it a temporary home. Food, lodging, and clothing are provided, in return for which the lads give their labour; and by their work the institution is self-supporting. There are at the present time in the Refuge four lads, and £80 9s. 6d. has been earned during the year. There are also in good working order the Sick and Provident Society and the Parents' Clothing Club, of which Mr. Newton is the secretary. We also learn that at the thirty-first anniversary of Mr. Newton's appointment as master, of which we reported proceedings some time back, in addition to the purse of £20 with which he was presented, he has since received a silver watch and chain, with the remainder of the money subscribed, being a fitting testimony to the value of a faithful servant.

Mr. Samuel Saw then read the financial statement to Christmas last, and also stated that up to the present occasion they had received £94 and had expended £113, so that there was a deficit of about £19, which he trusted they would be able to subscribe that afternoon.

The sum of £18 1s. 6d. was collected later in the afternoon.

The Chairman then called upon the Vicar of Greenwich to move the first resolution.

The meeting was addressed by the Rev. Brooke Lambert and the Rev. Baring-Gould, also by Mr. W. B. Lewis, who said only last Monday he was over at the schools, and though he felt the girls had improved since he was last there, the boys were of the same class as ever, distinctly gutter children. Though he appreciated the full value of the Act of 1870, which called the School Board into existence, he considered these lads were not fit to go into them for their education. They required teaching more minutely.

Mr. G. H. Frean also said: I can bear my testimony to the value of Ragged Schools. Boys in Ragged Schools are very trustworthy; they have the highest principles.